

I would be remiss if I didn't lift up our sister, native Virgin Islander Janelle James from St. Thomas, who won the 54th NAACP Image Award for best supporting actress for her role in "Abbott Elementary."

These are Virgin Islanders doing amazing things.

We might be a small place, but we think big. We live our lives big. We do not restrict ourselves just to the waters surrounding where we live.

In the words of the popular Rock City song that has as its authors individuals that I mentioned who received Grammy Awards: "The world is ours, Scarface, even though we come from a small place. No matter where I'm at, I'm VI all day."

Let's continue to be VI strong and VI proud. Happy Virgin Islands History Month.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1215

WAR IN UKRAINE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, one year into Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainians' valiant defense has resulted in tens of thousands of casualties for the Russians. What the Russians believed would be a victory in a matter of days or weeks has turned into now just over a year bloody slog. The Russian bear has turned out to be a paper tiger on the fields of Ukraine.

The United States must remain committed as a partner with Ukraine to achieve victory. Victory, Mr. Speaker, or Putin and his allied nations will attack the Baltic states or take Moldova or try to control the Black Sea. Türkiye, devastated by Erdogan's economics and the recent earthquake, will now face a stark choice of remaining in NATO or becoming a Putin puppet were Putin successful in Ukraine.

Victory in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, or China will be green-lighted to a fully nuclear madman in North Korea and attempt a blockade of Taiwan. In order to achieve that victory, President Biden must get the rest of the world even more engaged.

In December, Members of this body were briefed by the Departments of State and Treasury. I recently wrote Secretary Blinken and Secretary Yellen in follow-up regarding the funding strategy for supporting Ukraine with humanitarian, defense, and military means, and in their monthly costs.

I raised two principal points. First, in my view, Congress does not have the full financial picture of the contributions being made by the United States and our allies and partners on behalf of Ukraine in a straightforward and sim-

ple manner available to all Members. They don't paint a complete picture.

As a new member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I look forward to hearing from the State Department, USAID, and the Defense Department in the near future on what they have been doing to track our funding in Ukraine and explain it in thorough detail to the Congress.

Secondly, I raised with the two Secretaries the successful 1990-1991 partnership between Secretary of State James Baker and Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady in developing an active solicitation of major countries from around the world to fund the U.S. enforcement of the United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing use of force to liberate Kuwait from Iraq's illegal invasion of their sovereign territory.

The result was the United States received contributions from around the world of some \$53 billion against an estimated total cost to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait of \$60 billion. Now, while some of those contributions were in the form of in-kind material support, more than 90 percent was paid in cash.

The United States must be more strongly engaged with our allies to share a greater financial burden for the military, humanitarian, and budget support for the Government of Ukraine.

Just a few days ago, on February 20, Japan pledged \$5.5 billion in additional aid to Ukraine. This is on top of the \$1.3 billion in financial humanitarian assistance it had already pledged. This is a recent example of precisely what I think the United States Government should be achieving and achieving in a more aggressive and effective manner.

The worldwide response in support of Ukraine has been remarkable, but I believe that significantly more can be done to help Ukraine if additional countries provide more material and financial support in Europe and beyond.

The U.S. military has a unique role, an important role as the lead NATO partner in equipping, training, and providing related military materials. That mission suits us more than any other country. However, as demonstrated in my example of Kuwait, obtaining broad financial support from more sources is essential, in my view, to maintaining popular political support in Europe and in the United States for victory in Ukraine.

This also demonstrates how peoples from around the globe benefit from a prompt success of preservation of Ukraine's sovereignty. Cost of goods, access to food, fuel, and financing are all impeded by the Russian Federation's illegal action. That makes the case that all nations are hurt by Russia's aggression. All nations can support Ukraine.

President Biden must craft an active and effective campaign to bring forward the financial and material resources from around the world to fully support victory in Ukraine.

FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING BY THE CCP

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the practice of forced organ harvesting in China.

I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1154, the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), my friend. Congressman SMITH is also chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations. I am proud to serve as his vice chair for that subcommittee.

Forced organ harvesting is a disgusting and appalling practice carried out against minority groups in China by the Chinese Communist Party. They prey on the Uyghur people and Falun Gong practitioners. As the world knows full well about their genocide against the Uyghurs, we should not be surprised with China's lack of medical ethics.

Nury Turkel, the chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and my recent State of the Union guest has documented forced blood sampling and organ screening of Uyghur detainees in their reeducation camps. Nury, a Uyghur who emigrated to the United States at age 24, is an eyewitness to this barbaric culture.

Just last year, the United Nations was even "extremely alarmed" on credible information that forced organ harvesting continues in Communist China. What is disappointing is that, despite years of evidence of this practice, the United States currently has no law on the books to address this issue.

The Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act will do just that by adding penalties to those that violate the National Organ Transplant Act, and it will sanction those that fund, sponsor, or facilitate forced organ harvesting or human trafficking that leads to forced organ harvesting.

This bill passed unanimously out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee last week, and I look forward to seeing a strong vote in the full House in the future. We will pass it here, and I expect the Senate to pass this legislation and send it to President Biden.

It is long past time for the American Government to address this challenge through legislation and put a stop to this inhumanity. I appreciate Chairman SMITH for his leadership in introducing this legislation. It is another sign to the American people of how depraved the Chinese Communist Party is in their march to violate every norm of international society.

NATIONAL HOSTAGE AND WRONGFUL DETAINEE DAY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day.

I, along with my Democratic colleague, Congresswoman HALEY STEVENS, reintroduced our legislation yesterday that establishes March 9 as the National Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day. On March 9, 2007, Robert Levinson disappeared in Iran. He never returned home.

The commemoration of this national day brings attention to Americans that are being unjustly held as wrongful detainees and hostages in a foreign land.

Since the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act was signed into law 2 years ago, we have heard from families and organizations that are dedicated to helping bring wrongful detainees and hostages home and how that law is working.

We are learning more about how the Levinson act is being used since it has become law. It is time for the House Foreign Affairs Committee to conduct oversight and see what potential changes should be made.

I helped create in the last Congress the Congressional Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongly Detained Abroad because one of my constituents disappeared on a visit to Syria. Majd Kamalmaz is still being held by the Assad regime in Syria. Majd and his wonderful family lived for a time in my hometown of Little Rock.

Every Member of Congress is dedicated to the more than 50 Americans who right now are held against their will wrongfully in a country around the world. We all want to bring home Majd and every other American that is being held wrongfully.

I am proud to be a part of this task force and work alongside my friend, Congresswoman STEVENS. I thank all those who are involved for their efforts to bring awareness to wrongful detainees and hostages around the world and for working tirelessly to bring them home to their families in our great country.

RECOGNIZING ORIGAMI SAKE

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the entrepreneurial creativity of Ben Bell and Matt Bell, who recently founded Origami Sake in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Although they are unrelated, these two Bells share the same last name and the same passion for sake.

The pair met in 2016 after Ben returned to Arkansas from a trip to Japan where he became interested in the art of making sake after living in that country for 2 years.

After years of collaboration, Ben and Matt joined forces to begin brewing sake in Arkansas, which led to the opening of their business. Arkansas is the largest grower of rice in the United States and Isbell Farms has spent decades perfecting the proper rice to be used for sushi and now the proper rice that is needed for making high-quality sake.

Additionally, the magnificent water from the famous Hot Springs National Park has the perfect quality for sake brewing. Ben and Matt are taking advantage of these resources in Arkansas to make sake even more popular and distribute it homegrown in Arkansas across the United States.

I recently led a delegation to meet with leaders in Japan where our members had the opportunity to present Ar-

kansas-brewed sake to former Prime Minister Suga and Deputy Cabinet Secretary Kihara. Along with key members of the Japanese Diet, we also entertained our great Ambassador Rahm Emanuel with his own taste of a new Thousand Crane Sake brewed in Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Ben and Matt for their originality and entrepreneurship. I commend them for leading America in the brewing of sake.

VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the important partnership between the Arkansas Martin Luther King Commission and FOX 16 and KARK Television.

In 2017, following the horrible shootings at the Power Ultra Lounge nightclub in Little Rock, FOX 16 and KARK kicked off an important initiative to build grassroots support to reduce violence in central Arkansas. They called it Victory Over Violence.

The goal of the campaign is to unite leaders and groups throughout our local communities to be a resource for reducing violent crime and changing lives through community improvements.

In January, the Arkansas Martin Luther King Commission presented FOX 16 anchors Donna Terrell and Kevin Kelly with their 2023 Drum Major for Community Leadership award.

The persistence and successful leadership of Donna, Kevin, and all those involved at the Arkansas MLK Commission, FOX 16, and KARK, they are making an impact on improving the lives and safety in central Arkansas.

I am grateful for their efforts, their persistent efforts over all these past years to keep that at the forefront of community activism. Victory Over Violence is something that we need, and I am grateful for their leadership.

RECOGNIZING 2022 MISS ARKANSAS EBONY MITCHELL

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2022 Miss Arkansas winner, Ebony Mitchell.

Ebony was the 84th Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant winner, where she was awarded \$30,000 in scholarship funds provided by the Ted and Shannon Skokos Foundation and \$75,000 in other awards.

□ 1230

Last December, she represented our great State at Miss America in Connecticut.

Becoming Miss Arkansas was a lifetime dream for Ebony. Her journey started when she won the Miss University of Arkansas Princess pageant in 2007, which entered her into the Diamond State Princess mentorship program.

She had five appearances as Miss Arkansas before finally winning that title last year. Aside from her accomplishments as Miss Arkansas, she graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in 2019 with her bachelor's degree in business administration.

As Miss Arkansas, she will continue her social impact by leading the A Responsible Digital You initiative which seeks to keep children of Arkansas safe online.

Ebony is a native of Harrison, Arkansas, where she has been a leader in civil rights and community spirit in her hometown.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Ebony for her accomplishments, and I look forward to continuing to watch her proudly represent our great State of Arkansas.

CLEBURNE COUNTY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the addition of Cleburne County to the Second District of Arkansas.

Last year, during redistricting, the Arkansas State legislature added Cleburne County to the Second Congressional District. The addition of Cleburne County brings beautiful nature, economic development, and many other recreational ideas and opportunities to my district.

An active business and civic community, excellent healthcare and educational facilities and opportunities, along with Greers Ferry National Fish Hatchery, Greers Ferry Dam, Rotary Clubs, the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail, and world-class fly fishing on the Little Red River all are amazing examples of what the county has to offer.

I am proud to now serve those who live in Cleburne County, and I look forward to representing them in Washington at their U.S. Capitol.

CONGRATULATING DEBBY MEECE ON HER RETIREMENT

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend, Executive Assistant to the Medical Director at Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, Debby Meece.

Debby is retiring after 40 years of service to Central Arkansas Veterans Affairs.

Debby is an Arkansas native, and she always has exhibited kindness and consideration on a daily basis to coworkers, patients, and visitors alike. She is a role model for everyone in public service because of the positive impact she had in her daily work at Central Arkansas VA.

The standard of care she has established will continue for generations to come in our VA hospital in central Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Debby for her dedication and service to veterans. Without her time and effort, many voices would have gone unheard. Every day she was at work, she put others first.

I congratulate Debby, and I wish her a very happy retirement.

SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE JACK HOLT, JR.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Arkansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Jack Holt, Jr., who passed away on March 5, 2023.

Former Chief Justice Holt began his career in the United States Air Force

where he achieved the rank of colonel. He then went on to work in Arkansas as a deputy prosecutor, chief assistant attorney general, and ultimately served as the Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court for 10 years from 1985 to 1995.

Jack Holt will be remembered for his significant contributions to the modern justice system that exists in Arkansas, including the creation of our juvenile courts.

Justice Holt is credited with setting up the essential parts of our court systems in Arkansas. His advancement of the education requirement for attorneys and the creation of more staff positions to help circuit court judges has greatly improved the effectiveness of justice in my State.

I thank former Chief Justice Holt for his many years of service and contributions to the State of Arkansas. His legacy truly lives on.

My prayers for comfort are with his wife Jane, their family, and their friends.

RESCUE ROAD

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rescue Road on rescuing 8,000 dogs.

Rescue Road is a dog fostering organization based in Little Rock. Their mission is to place adoptable dogs in high-kill shelters into other networks in order to find a permanent home and a loving family. The organization works with their team of volunteers and foster families throughout our State of Arkansas.

In January they placed their 8,000th dog in a home—a great milestone.

I thank all those volunteers involved with Rescue Road for their hard work and for their dedication to helping dogs find their forever homes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss three issues. Some have gotten attention, and some have not this week, but all of them are important, and I would say none of them got the attention they deserve.

The first issue to talk about is the size of our Federal debt.

Now, I know, ever since I was a child, people have talked about deficit spending and the amount of the Federal debt that someday the children or grandchildren will have to pay off.

I think it is important to look, though, that this time things really are different. The only time the Federal debt ever got to the total gross national product in this country—which is one way to compare debt at different times in our country's history—was when it actually hit 100 percent at the end of World War II. That is not surprising.

If you know people who lived during World War II, Mr. Speaker, the entire economy was devoted to munitions, a huge percent of our population was in the armed services, and we hit 100 percent.

However—unlike now—when the war ended, it was easy to reduce Federal spending. Hundreds of thousands of troops were, in essence, laid off and sent back to work in the private sector, we stopped building the ships, planes, and tanks we needed during the war, and as a result, over the next 30 years, the amount of the Federal debt dropped from 100 percent of GDP down to around 30 percent. It bounced back and forth around that level, maybe 40 percent, all the way to about 1995.

Even then that was too big, and people commented at the time, but the debt was about 30 to 45 percent of GDP.

Then, beginning with around 2010, things began to shoot up, and in COVID they shot up even more. We are now—or within a couple years will be—where we were at the end of World War II. But there are no tank factories or ship factories to shut down, and we can't lay off hundreds of thousands of troops.

Indeed, any Congressman knows that basically our day is spent attending meetings in our offices when we are here with various groups asking for spending increases and saying that they absolutely need them.

So this time, we really are in a crisis.

Not only are we in a situation in which we are approaching 100 percent of our debt equaling 100 percent of GDP, but because interest rates are going up and the huge increase in debt the last 2 years, the amount we are paying in interest is skyrocketing.

We cannot reduce the interest. If we had interest on our debt—which we anticipate will go up in the next year from \$640 billion a year to \$740 billion a year—that is a \$100 billion spending increase that we have no control over.

As the debt continues to go up and as the Federal Reserve feels—and I was in a committee hearing yesterday both the Republican witnesses and Democrat witnesses felt given what inflation was going on, as the Federal Reserve continues to raise interest rates, the amount of interest that we have to pay every year goes up.

Think about that, Mr. Speaker. We have got about a \$100 billion increase in the difference between what we are going to pay in interest in 2023 and 2024 before we look at anything else.

So the fact that this budget proposal contains more spending is, by itself, deeply concerning. It shows that the basic numbers have not gotten through the heads of the Biden administration, or maybe they feel that by the time we finally hit the wall and the value of the dollar will have a hard time paying off our debt, that he will be in a retirement home and other people will have to deal with it.

But the American public should know that for the first time since World War II, we are approaching hav-

ing the total debt equal to 100 percent of our GDP—a complete crisis.

The next thing to look at is if we must spend more, then where does President Biden feel it has to be spent?

One place it is not going to be spent, one place that we actually have a reduction here, is homeland security. The biggest crisis we have in this country is people streaming across our southern border. But we can find over a 10 percent increase for the Department of Commerce, we can find almost a 10 percent increase for the Department of the Interior, an 11 percent increase for the Department of Labor, and a 19 percent increase for the Environmental Protection Agency, but when it comes down to the one thing that you turn on the TV every night and say, wow, we have to spend more money there, on the Department of Homeland Security there is a 1 percent reduction.

This is where our President is.

We are going to continue to have increased spending across the board—some of which is necessary—but the one place we don't have an increase is homeland security. That and transportation. I take that to be because we just had the huge infrastructure bill and, therefore, we don't need an increase in the spending on transportation.

The other thing I would like to point out, as you dig deeper into the budget, with regard to any agency you look at, Mr. Speaker, you have more money for bureaucrats devoted to dividing America by race: We have to do more to favor this race or that race or this gender or that gender.

That is so offensive and un-American. I am going to address it a lot more in a few minutes. But it is interesting that at the time we are getting the highest amount of debt as a percentage of GDP in my lifetime, the President responds by saying that the one area that we absolutely have to have more in is hiring bureaucrats whose job depends on telling America we have a racist problem and we have to identify people by race. That is a big problem.

So I encourage the American public to pay attention to the budget, pay attention to the fact that we are hitting in our lifetimes the greatest debt ever, and pay attention to the fact that even before we argue and quibble about how much the Department of Education should go up or down or how much we should spend more or less on defense, we are going to have a \$100 billion increase in the amount of interest we pay next year.

The next area to look at—and I mentioned that the Biden administration actually feels we can reduce the total amount we are spending on homeland security—is I wish the press would spend more time seeing what is happening with the children at our southern border.

There was, in retrospect, a relatively small number of children who had to be separated from their parents who had